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General

78 N.

DER

BLAUE REITER

COVER: Woodcut by Wassily Kandinsky
for DER BLAUE REITER ALMANAC

DER BLAUE REITER

December 7, 1954 – January 8, 1955

CURT VALENTIN GALLERY

32 EAST 57 STREET · NEW YORK

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The gallery wishes to thank the following people for their assistance and cooperation: *Albert Bloch, Heinrich Campendonk, Dr. Johannes Eichner, Mr. Myrtil Frank* and *Gabriele Muenter.*

The gallery would like to extend special thanks to *Mr. Frederick Zimmermann* for his extraordinary help and assistance.

LIBRARY

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DER BLAUE REITER*

From a letter by Wassily Kandinsky

My dear Mr. Westheim,

You have asked me for my recollections about the formation of "Der Blaue Reiter." Today — after so many years — this is an understandable request, and I am happy to comply.

• • • • •

I lived in Munich for many years. It was there that I painted my first abstract picture. There I was constantly preoccupied with thoughts

*The Blue Rider.

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about "pure" painting, pure art. I was trying to forge ahead in "analytic" art, to determine synthetic relationships; I dreamed of the "great synthesis" that was to come. I felt compelled to communicate my thoughts not only to the island immediately around me, but also to those beyond this island. I considered them inspiring and essential.

So my first book, "Ueber das Geistige in der Kunst" (Concerning *The Spiritual in Art*) developed spontaneously, *pro doma sua*, from my random notes.

At the same time, I had a growing desire to compile a book, a kind of almanac, in which outstanding artists would cooperate as authors. I had in mind painters and musicians of top quality. The unfortunate isolation of one form of art from another — of "Art" from popular art, children's art and ethnography . . . disturbed me. Today it may seem strange that for a long time I could find no co-workers, no means, simply not enough interest in this idea.

This was the time of the robust beginnings of many "isms," which still did not perceive the synthetic and were primarily occupied with spirited "civil wars."

Almost at the same time (1911-1912), two great trends developed in painting: cubism, and abstract (i.e. absolute) painting. At the same time came futurism, dadaism, and expressionism, which soon triumphed.

Atonal music and its champion Arnold Schoenberg, who was a universal laughing stock at that time, were no less an inspiration than these "isms" of painting. I came to know Schoenberg at this time and

immediately found him to be an ardent supporter of "Der Blaue Reiter" concept.

And then Franz Marc, from Sindelsdorf, appeared. One conversation was enough: we understood each other completely. In this unforgettable man I found an artist of a type very rare at the time (perhaps just as rare today). He was a man who could see far beyond the confines of provincialism, who was not just an external but an internal opponent of all the narrow and restrictive in tradition.

We talked over our advanced movement for days, for long nights, now and then even halfway through the night. It was obvious to both of us from the very beginning that we had to have a brutally severe rule as our guide: absolute freedom in the realization of the concept we had set up.

Franz Marc enjoyed the very strong and helpful support of August Macke, who was quite young at the time. Macke's primary task was to take care of the ethnographic material.

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Everything happened so fast! Even before the book appeared, Franz Marc and I assembled the first exhibition of "Der Blaue Reiter"* at the Galerie Thannhauser. The basis was the same: no propagandizing of a specific, exclusive "trend", but rather a liberal exhibition of the

*We invented the name "Der Blaue Reiter" over our coffee cups in the garden arbor in Sindelsdorf. We both liked blue: Marc, horses – I, riders. So the name was effortlessly born.

most varied forms of contemporary painting on an international basis."

My neighbor in Schwabing was Paul Klee. He was still a very insignificant man at the time, so to speak. But I can say, with pardonable pride, that I perceived the great Paul Klee of later years in his tiny drawings of this period. (He was not yet painting). A drawing of his can be found in "Der Blaue Reiter."

My plan for the next volume of "Der Blaue Reiter" series was to compare art and science: origin, development in scope, ultimate purpose. Today, I know much better than I did then how many ramifications can be traced back to a single source — but this is the task of the future.

And then came the war, and even these modest hopes were dashed.

What is really essential, though — intrinsically essential — can be beaten down, but never torn out by the roots.

Yours cordially,
WASSILY KANDINSKY

FROM DAS KUNSTBLATT, 1930
TRANSLATION BY WILLIAM CRUMLEY

FRANZ MARC: *from an article in* PAN, *March 7, 1912*

"We are to-day seeking behind the veil of nature's outward appearance hidden things which seem to us more important than the discoveries of the Impressionists. . . . We are seeking and painting this spiritual side of ours in nature, not out of whim or for the joy of being different, but because we see this side, just as formerly people suddenly 'saw' violet shadows and the atmosphere over all things. . . . Is it seriously believed that we new painters do not obtain our form from nature, that we do not wrest it from nature just as all artists in all ages have done? . . . Nature glows in our pictures as in every form of art. Nature is everywhere, in us and outside us; there is only one thing that is not altogether nature, but rather the overcoming and interpreting of nature; art. Art always has been and is in its very essence the boldest departure from nature and 'naturalness.' It is the bridge into the spirit world. . . ."

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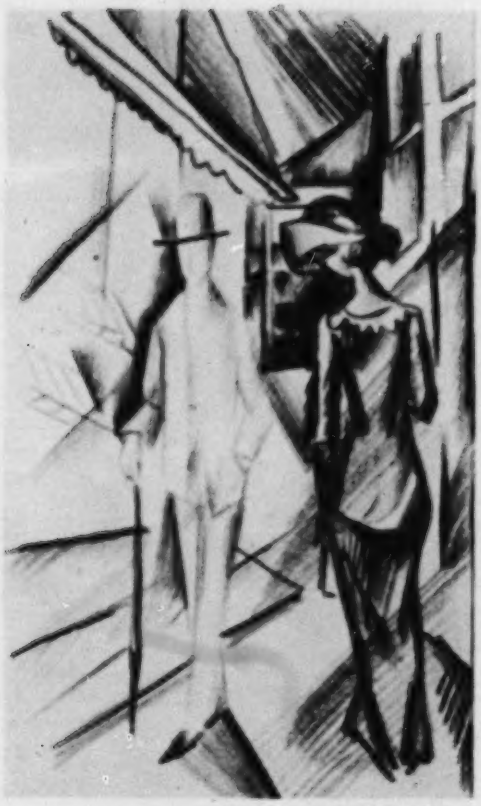

CATALOGUE

ALBERT BLOCH
(1881-)

1 **PIPING PIERROT**
1911. Oil. 31 x 39¾"

DAVID BURLIUK
(1882-)

2 **THE DEATH RIDER**
c. 1911-12. Oil. 34 x 24"

HEINRICH CAMPENDONK
(1889-)

3 **HARLEQUIN AND COLUMBINE**
1913. Oil. 64½ x 78"
Mr. and Mrs. Morton D. May

LYONEL FEININGER
(1871-)

4 **ALLEE**
1914. Oil. 31½ x 39½"

ALEXEI VON JAWLENSKY
(1864-1941)

5 **LANDSCAPE**
c. 1910. Oil. 13 x 16½"

6 **HEAD**
c. 1910. Oil. 20⅝ x 19⅛"
Yale University Art Galleries

7 **GIRL IN YELLOW CHAIR**
1911. Oil. 21 x 19¾"
Mrs. Gertrude Lenart

8 **HEAD OF A WOMAN**
c. 1913. Oil. 17¾ x 13½"
Busch-Reisinger Museum

9 VARIATION SUMMER
1915. Oil. 14 x 10¾"

10 LANDSCAPE
1915. Oil. 21½ x 14¾"

WASSILY KANDINSKY
(1866-1944)

11 THE BLUE RIDER
c. 1903. Oil. 19⅞ x 21¾"

12 HOUSES AT MURNAU
1908. Oil. 41 x 37½"
Mrs. Katherine Kuh

13 STREET IN MURNAU
1908. Oil. 27¼ x 37¼"
Private Collection, New York

14 IMPROVISATION
1910. Oil. 27¼ x 18⅞"
Yale University Art Galleries

15 NUDE
1911. Oil. 58 x 39"
Mr. and Mrs. Morton D. May

16 COMPOSITION
1913. Oil. 34½ x 39¼"
Albright Art Gallery

17 COMPOSITION: STORM
1913. Oil. 39¼ x 31"
The Phillips Gallery

PAUL KLEE
(1877-1940)

18 BOY IN FUR JACKET
1909. Wash. 9¼ x 9"
Mr. G. David Thompson

19 NO. 44
1910. Watercolor. 4 x 4⅝"

20 HANNAH
1910. Wash. 7 x 4¼"
Mr. and Mrs. F. C. Schang

21 TWO LADIES
1911. Wash. 4 x 5"
Mr. and Mrs. F. C. Schang

22 RESIDENTIAL SECTION
1912. Gouache. 5¾ x 8½"
Mr. Richard Sisson

23 VIEW OF THE SQUARE
1912. Watercolor. 6½ x 10⅝"
Mr. Clifford Odets

24 IDOLS
1913. Ink. 5 x 4"
Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Zimmermann

25 MOTHER AND CHILD
1913. Watercolor. 4 x 4½"
Mr. and Mrs. F. C. Schang

26 MACHINE
1913. Ink. 3⅝ x 6½"

27 COMPOSITION
1914. Watercolor. 4¼ x 5"

28 VIEW OF ST. GERMAIN
1914. Watercolor. 9 x 11"
Mr. and Mrs. F. C. Schang

ALFRED KUBIN
(1877-)

29 IN THE TUNNEL
1908-14. Gouache. 15¾ x 12½"

30 **STORM**
1908-14. Watercolor. 6½ x 9½"

31 **SNAKECHARMER**
1908-14. Pastel. 9¼ x 10¾"

AUGUST MACKE
(1887-1914)

32 **MORNING WALK**
1908. Oil. 20¾ x 16½"
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Samuel

33 **SAILBOATS**
c. 1908. Oil. 28 x 20"
Mr. and Mrs. Sigmund Heumann

34 **AT THE ZOO**
1911. Watercolor. 7¾ x 8¾"
Busch-Reisinger Museum

35 **PROMENADERS**
c. 1913. Pencil. 5 x 6¾"
Busch-Reisinger Museum

36 **MEETING**
1913. Pencil. 6¾ x 4¼"
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Rosenberg

37 **LADY WITH VEIL**
1913. Pencil. 10 x 12"
Mr. and Mrs. W. Selinsky

38 **TWO MEN BESIDE THE RIVER**
c. 1913. Pencil. 7½ x 6¼"

39 **COUPLE TAKING A WALK**
1914. Watercolor. 19½ x 17½"
Mr. and Mrs. Richard S. Davis

40 **LADY IN A PARK**
1914. Oil. 38 x 23"

FRANZ MARC
(1880-1916)

41 **RED HORSES**
1911. Oil. 47¾ x 72"
Anonymous loan, Cincinnati

42 **BLUE HORSES**
1911. Oil. 40¾ x 70⅞"
Walker Art Center

43 **FIGHTING COWS**
1911. Oil. 32-4/5 x 54"
Anonymous loan H. A.

44 BEWITCHED MILL
1912. Oil. 51⅜ x 35¾"
Art Institute of Chicago

45 ANIMALS IN THE MOUNTAINS
c. 1912. Gouache. 18 x 15¾"

46 BLUE HORSE IN A LANDSCAPE
1913. Gouache. 6 x 10"
Mr. John S. Newberry, Jr.

47 ANTELOPE
1913. Watercolor. 15 x 17½"
Rhode Island School of Design

48 TWO HORSES
c. 1913. Watercolor. 17¼ x 15"
Rhode Island School of Design

49 PLAYING DOGS
c. 1913. Gouache. 8¼ x 10"
Busch-Reisinger Museum

GABRIELE MUENTER
(1877-)

50 STILL LIFE RED
1909. Oil. 21¼ x 15¾"

THE FIRST exhibition of "DER BLAUE REITER," organized by Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc in 1911, was held in Munich at the Heinrich Thannhauser gallery. Forty-three paintings were on display from December 18, 1911 to January 1912. Fourteen artists were represented: Henri Rousseau, Albert Bloch, David Burliuk, Wladimir Burliuk, Heinrich Campendonk, Robert Delaunay, Elizabeth Epstein, Eugene Kahler, Wassily Kandinsky, August Macke, Franz Marc, Gabriele Muenter, J. B. Niestlé and Arnold Schoenberg.

The exhibition travelled through Germany in 1912, appearing in the cities of Koln, Berlin, Hagen and Frankfurt.

The second exhibition of "Der Blaue Reiter," also organized by Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc, was limited to graphics and drawings. Thirty-one artists exhibited 315 works, at the gallery of Hans Goltz in Munich, during March and April of 1912. Invited to participate with Albert Bloch, Robert Delaunay, Wassily Kandinsky, August Macke, Franz Marc and Gabriele Muenter were, among others, Paul Klee and Alfred Kubin.

A large international show, "Erste Deutscher Herbstsalon" was held in Berlin, in 1913 at the gallery 'Der Sturm,' exhibiting 366 works by 85 artists. Included, were eleven members of "Der Blaue Reiter," and the painters Lyonel Feininger and Alexi von Jawlensky.